# Foreign Students: Screening and Monitoring

There were about 1.3 million foreign post-secondary students and scholars in the United States in 2022, and about 7,500 post-secondary U.S. schools were approved to host them. Foreign students and scholars enter the country on nonimmigrant (i.e., temporary) visas, a process that involves multiple federal agencies as well as educational institutions. Congress has expressed interest in the processes by which these individuals are permitted to travel to and remain in the United States.

Student and **Exchange Visitor Information System** 

(SEVIS)

SEVIS is a database used by DHS and DOS to monitor students, exchange visitors, and their dependents who enter the United States on F, M, or J visas. SEVIS is managed by DHS's **SEVP**. DHS/SEVP monitors F and M students. DOS's **ECA** monitors J students and scholars.

All F, M, and J nonimmigrants have a SEVIS record that contains their entry/exit data, U.S. address, academic program and status, coursework, work authorization, graduation, transfers, withdrawals, no-shows, and disciplinary action. SEVIS records are created during the visa application process and updated throughout the student's stay in the United States.

Types of Student Visas ▶ F1 Academic study





Exchange visitors, including students, professors, and research scholars



### **Student Admission Process**

F1 and M1 Visas

J1 Visas

Prospective student/ exchange visitor (EV) applies to

SEVP-approved

DOS-approved EV program

Student/EV is accepted by

school

program

School registers student/EV in SEVIS: student/EV pays **SEVIS** fee to ICE.

> School issues student/EV Certificate of Eligibility

form DS-2019

Student/EV submits online application (DS-160) to DOS for nonimmigrant visa

F or M visa

Consular officer conducts visa interview and **screens applicant** to determine visa eligibility. Student/EV presents certificate of eligibility

form I-20

form DS-2019

If applicant meets all criteria, visa is issued. DOS can revoke visa once it is issued, before or after entry to the U.S.

> Student/EV travels to the U.S. to begin course of study.

At U.S. port of entry, CBP officers can deny or admit student.

If admitted, CBP issues Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record to student/EV.

While in the U.S., student's/EV's record is maintained in SEVIS. Student/EV can remain in the U.S. as long as he/she maintains status; this may include obtaining an extension of form I-20 or DS-2019 from the school.

DHS: Department of Homeland Security; CBP: Customs and Border Protection; ICE: Immigration and Customs Enforcement **SEVP:** Student and Exchange Visitor Program

**DOS: Department of State**; **ECA:** Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs



## **School Approval Process**

F1 and M1 Students

J1 Students/Scholars

School applies through **SEVIS** to

DHS/SEVP for certification DOS/ECA for designation as a program sponsor

School agrees to comply with federal laws, regulations, and requirements including

8 C.F.R. §214.3

22 C.F.R §62

#### School appoints

Designated school officials (DSOs)

Responsible officers (ROs)

who are responsible for maintaining school and student records in **SEVIS**. DSOs and ROs must be U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents.

SEVP conducts site visit and adjudicates application.

**ECA** adjudicates application.

School is notified of decision.

SEVP certification is good for two years.

ECA designation is good for one or two years.

#### Compliance

School must re-certify every two years and is subject to review at any time.

School must submit annual report to ECA, apply for re-designation when it expires, and cooperate with inquiries/ investigations.

Approval to host F/M/J students may be terminated at any time for failure to comply.



#### Visa Screening

Visa applicants are required to submit their photograph and fingerprints, full name, age, gender, and date and place of birth. All visa applicants are subject to national security reviews using the resources of multiple federal intelligence and law enforcement agencies.





#### **Author Information**

Jill H. Wilson Analyst in Immigration Policy

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